Introduction to School

The School of Surgery in Health Education Thames Valley is responsible for overseeing the post-graduate training and education of surgical trainees from CT1 (Core Training) to CCT (the Certificate of Completion of Training). Currently the school is divided into two main faculties: The Core Training Programme and The Specialist Training Programme.

The Thames Valley region encompasses the counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. The major hospital sites where surgical training is undertaken are:

1. In Oxfordshire, the Oxford University Hospitals Trust: the John Radcliffe, the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre and the Churchill in Oxford; and the Horton Hospital in Banbury.
2. In Berkshire, the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading; Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals in Ascot and Slough.
3. In Buckinghamshire, the Buckinghamshire Healthcare hospitals in High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury; and Milton Keynes General Hospital in Milton Keynes.

Training Opportunities within the School

The core training programme consists of approximately 36 trainees who are following programmes in surgery in general, equipping them to apply for Specialist Training in their chosen field, or if that is not possible being guided to another satisfying career pathway, and 12 Academic Clinical Fellows (ACFs). The school offers training in all the nine SAC recognised surgical specialties, some entirely within Health Education Thames Valley (General Surgery, Trauma and Orthopaedics, Urology and Neurosurgery). The other specialties, namely Cardiothoracic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Oro Maxillo Facial Surgery and Paediatric Surgery all rotate with neighbouring deaneries.

Facts about the School

The school's strong foundation is based upon the belief that all trainees can achieve surgical excellence & unrivalled patient care by having a group of individuals with diverse goals and an enthusiastic temperament, who are encouraged and nurtured to fulfil all compulsory facets of the surgical curriculum whilst developing skills in research, leadership and education. Trainees are recruited from all over the world and are chosen entirely on merit based upon wide ranging criteria and surgical potential. A recent survey of current trainees showed that most trainees have multiple academic publications as well as a wide range of participation in high level extra-curricular activities including international representation in sport & music.

We have a strong tradition of nurturing bright and capable surgical trainees. We offer all core trainees an opportunity to teach anatomy to undergraduates, and in return offer them relevant basic science teaching. We have regular Core Training teaching sessions leading to the MRCS and beyond. We have many trainees taking advantage of being associated with a premier research university in order to engage in research, frequently for a DPhil, the Oxford PhD. The pass rates for the exit exams are consistently high. Our aim is that trainees should be encouraged and inspired to develop their skills in all areas of surgical expertise in a variety of ways.

Key Contact Details

Head of School: Mr Jeremy Noble  
Deputy Head of School: Mr Ashok Handa  
Programme Manager: Miss Jane Bishop  

jeremy.noble@thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk  
ashok.handa@nds.ox.ac.uk  
jane.bishop@thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk